

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR FUNDING AND
AWARDING BONUSES IN A GAMING ENVIRONMENT**
ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

Ins A1) A method and system for providing a bonus to a player of a game in a gaming environment are disclosed. In one embodiment, the method comprises determining if a player is eligible to participate in a bonus event, such as by determining that a player is playing a game via a player tracking network. Next, it is determined if the player is a winner of a bonus of the bonus event, such as by meeting one or more bonus event criteria. The criteria are preferably independent of the specific outcome of the game played by the player. Bonus information is generated and provided to the player. In one embodiment, the bonus system includes a player tracking system comprising a player tracking device at a gaming machine, a remote player tracking host and a network by which information may be sent to and from the player tracking device and player tracking host. The bonus system includes a bonus system host associated with the network, the bonus system host capable of generating bonus event information which is transmitted to the player tracking device via the network. In one embodiment, the player tracking device includes a player tracking device controller and one or more peripherals, such as a card reader, display and speakers. Bonus event information is displayed and audible information is generated in response to the sending of bonus event information from the bonus event host to the player tracking device controller.

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